

#331 Easter term - 1915 First lecture -

The way to prevent history being a bore is to get into
~~history in a way that people who do not get into touch with~~
~~touch with its human aspects -~~
~~its human aspects.~~ In order to find it really interesting one has to

identify it with oneself; and to see human beings of like nature
with ourselves trying to cope with difficulties which would be
just the same difficulties to ourselves if we were in their

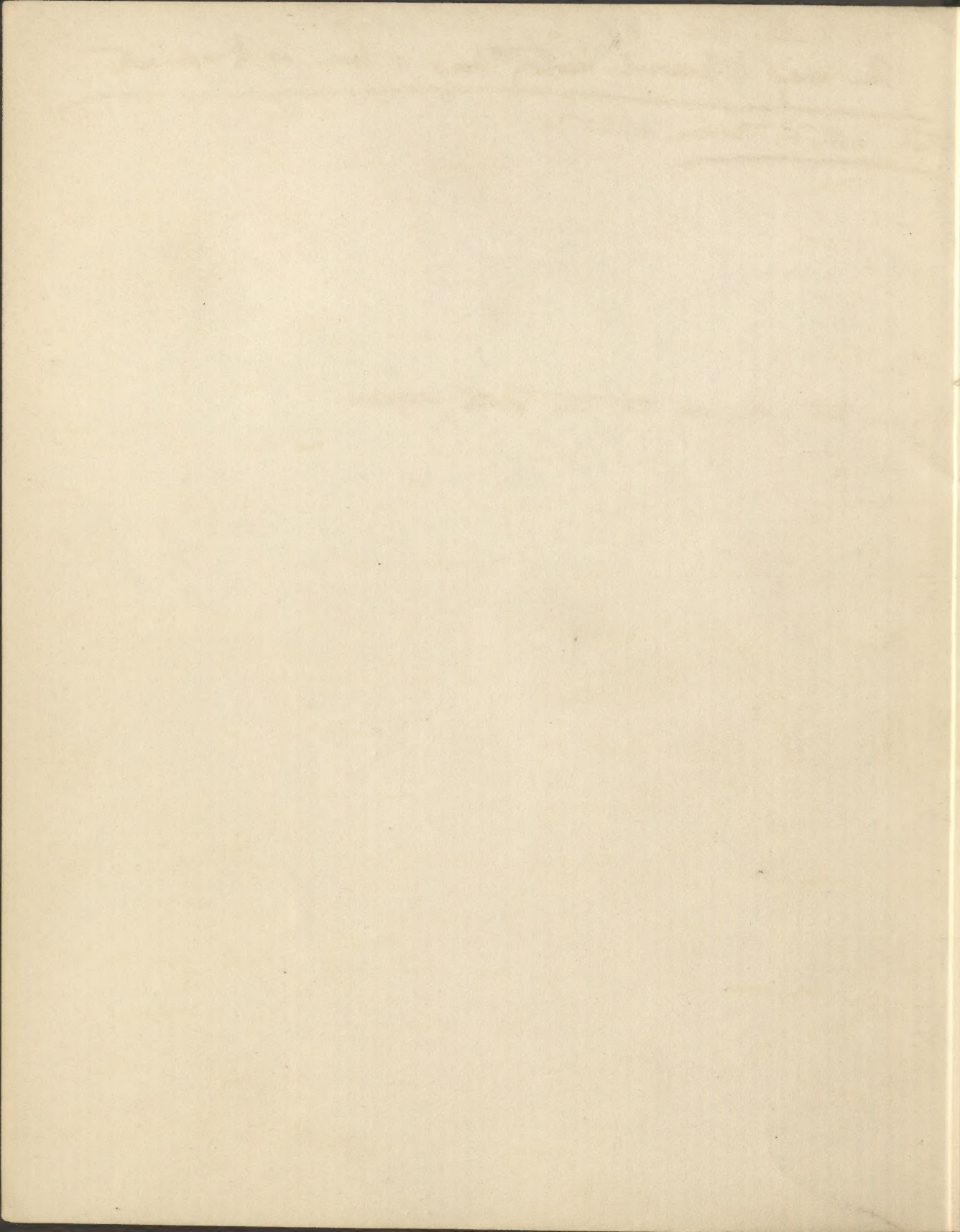
places. People solve difficulties and pass on what they have found
out - and that is one way that the world progresses.

and the people who have the advantage of having the
difficulties then difficulties provided for in such a way (usually
thoughtlessly assume that they have none to think for it -

that Providence or Nature or something equally vague put them
in possession of knowledge how to do things and that they can
go on comfortably doing them without troubling to find out
how the difficulties come to be overcome. But as a matter

of fact the overcoming of difficulties is the main interest
in life. Unluckily people who are spared all the misery
of overcoming difficulties are bored and stupid, and their lives
are little use to themselves and not none at all to other

people. In order to understand anything a man must have
been placed in the position of having to overcome its difficulties.



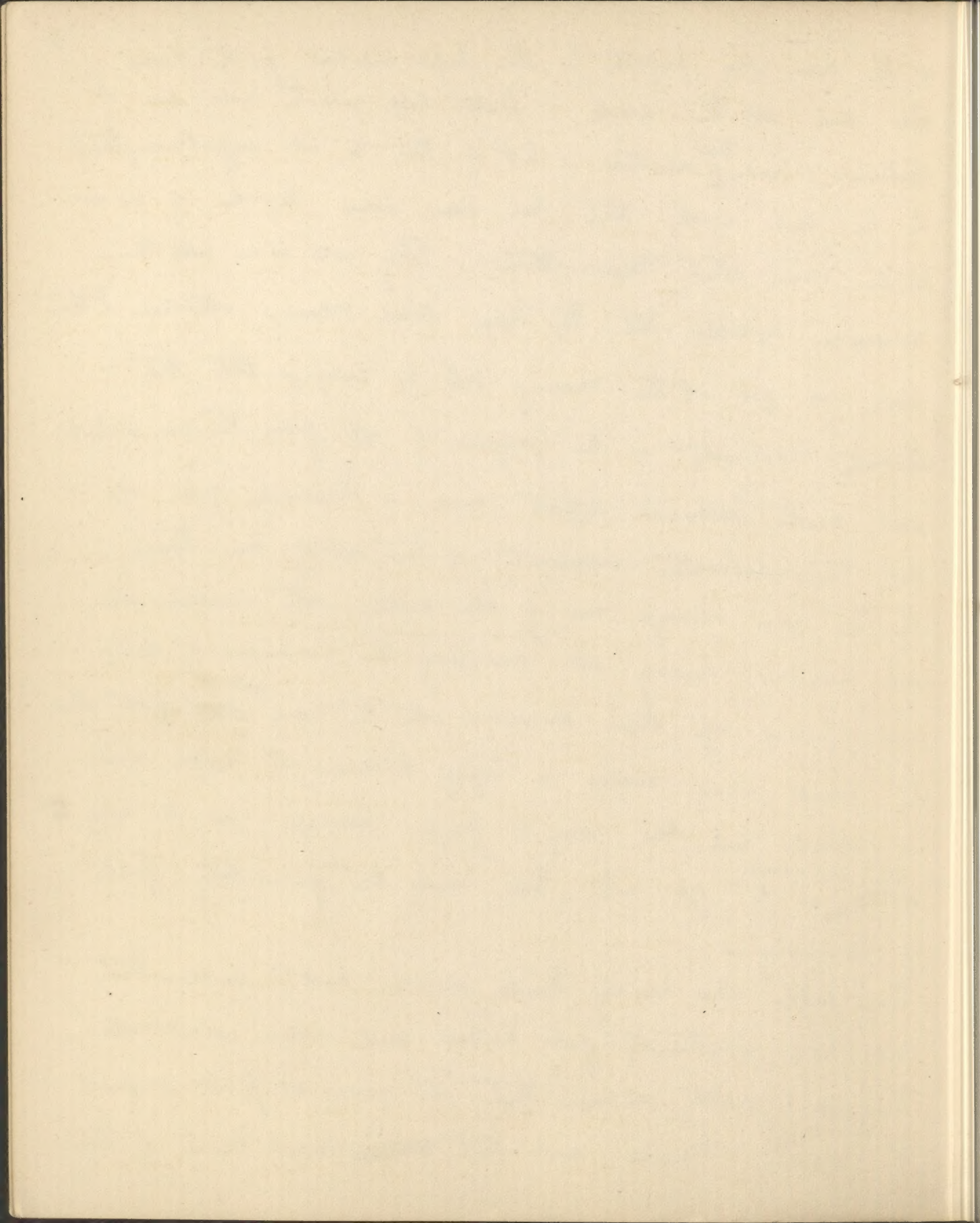
If he has not to overcome them himself he may get advantage
 by putting himself in imagination in the position of the people
 who ^{found out how} ~~learned~~ to overcome them; and renew the processes in
 his mind. All through the long history of Man's successive
 generations of people have been finding out how to overcome
 the difficulties which presented themselves to their minds; and
 if we can realize their difficulties and see how they were
 vanquished we can understand our ~~to~~ ^{as} better that
 way than any other way. There are of course rotten
 and unprofitable ways of looking at history. One of the
 rottest and stupidest is to think it is made up of names
 and dates. People who lack the impulse to enquire
 their minds fall back on mere memorizing - and the
 easiest things to memorize are names and dates. But
 you ~~may~~ ^{have} a perfect encyclopedia of facts in your
 mind and continue to understand nothing at all.
 Dates ~~and~~ ^{useful} and names are things to check your understanding
 by. They are of no use till after you have got some
 understanding. They may enable you to put things in their
 right order and to prevent your mistaking the cart for the horse.

no better than nonsense syllables.

absolute continuity.

or the man who profited by other people's exertions for the man
 who did all the work. Dates help you to make sense of
 distances, and ^{true} relations, but if they do not suggest anything
 in the real work that has been done they are of no use
 to the man who knows them. They will be no better than
 nonsense syllables till they have some meaning attached to them.
 And we get at the meaning best by realizing that there is
 absolute continuity in the progress of art from the very earliest
 and most barbarous efforts made a thousand years ago
 and the elaborate complexity of the art of our time.
 That it was always one of like nature with ourselves who
 were working away at developing the resources of art
 and picking up their discoveries with the same ^{sort of} ~~sort of~~ efforts which
 the small child makes in trying to learn its scales and
 its chords and the way to finger passages, or the way to
 use ~~the~~ ^{the} bow arms ~~to~~ ^{to} get into their heads the elementary facts
 of harmony.

Even people who hardly think at all must be aware that
 art has constantly got richer and more elaborate.
 They are mostly aware that it was at first confined
 to vocal music, and that ~~music~~ vocal music of the



baldest and clumsiest kind. And that men continued to devote
 their attention to vocal music for some 4000 years. ~~Then~~ By that
 time they had found out how to make admirable works of art,
 works that were as perfect as art can be within the slender
 limits available in pure Choral Music. Then they began
 to try their hands at instrumental Music and vocal Music
 with accompaniment ^{and Musical drama}, and went back to primitive conditions
 again. For there again they had to build everything up
 from the beginning - and it took them a long time to
 develop anything at all satisfactory - but after a hundred
 years or so that found out simple principles of form
 and established the artistic types for ^{Sonatas and} Sonatas and Symphonies
 and Overtures; and then in turn they got beyond them
 and set ahead art into the innumerable forms of
 Operas and Music dramas and Symphonic poems for Orchestra
 and domestic music and Russian ballet Music and
 just impressionist Music and futurist Music, and
 post futurist Music and so forth.
 And all this incredible abundance may be said to
 have grown up from the simple simple melodious

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passages which constituted the plain song of the early church, ^{medieval}
which were the only forms of art-things ~~and folk songs~~ ~~which~~ had inherited ~~such things~~ from the earlier

ages.
It is obvious enough why music began with vocal music, because
voices ready to make music with ~~and instruments had to be made~~, and
men had ~~hardly any instruments to play with~~ ~~they had to find~~
~~the way to play on them~~ ~~found out~~, and as long as they were satisfied
to explore the possibilities of vocal music they did not
want them. They had to begin with simple melodies
lines because they knew nothing of harmony. They were
as innocent of harmony as an ordinary song bird - and
they could not write anything down because they knew
nothing of staves and notes - and so had to trust
to their memory even for the simple melodies they used.
The absence of any means for writing music made it almost
impossible to write any kind of counterpoint or free
additional parts to a given melody; and this was in
fact made quite impossible by their having no system
to distinguish relative lengths of notes ^{or relations of pitch}. They knew
nothing of semibreves and minims and ~~of~~ crotchets
and quavers - all that had to be found out,

Organum or Diaphony described in a book
 called Musica Enchiridialis of the 10th century
 used to be considered by a monk called Humbold -
 later investigations refer it to Otger or Odo
 Abbot of ~~St. Omer~~ of Pons -

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The extent to which a discounter was allowed to
 almost unbelievable till you see it recorded.

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and so had means to distinguish intervals such as seconds
and thirds and fourths and fifths. The result of all
this was that the first departure they made from the single
line of melody was not the addition of an independent
part, but the same ~~same~~ melody as the other part
at a different pitch. They had voices of different calibres
as we have, and it was not convenient for Tenors
and Basses to sing the plain-song at the same level. It
was either too high for the basses or too low for the
tenors - they adopted the practise of singing the
plain-song in parallel fifths and fourths, or fourths and
octaves - a form of concordance which seemed extremely
foreign till it was revived in our own times as
a new and original discovery. This daring innovation
was called Organum or Diaphony. It began
to grow towards Counterpoint when singers began to
put in certain unmeasured notes between one fifth and another.
It became organized since, which was probably first attempted
by the singers, and then imitated by composers. But there
was one ~~great~~ significant obstacle which they had to get over.

Grado d'Arzo : Micrologus - 3 1000 - 1050
Schmization

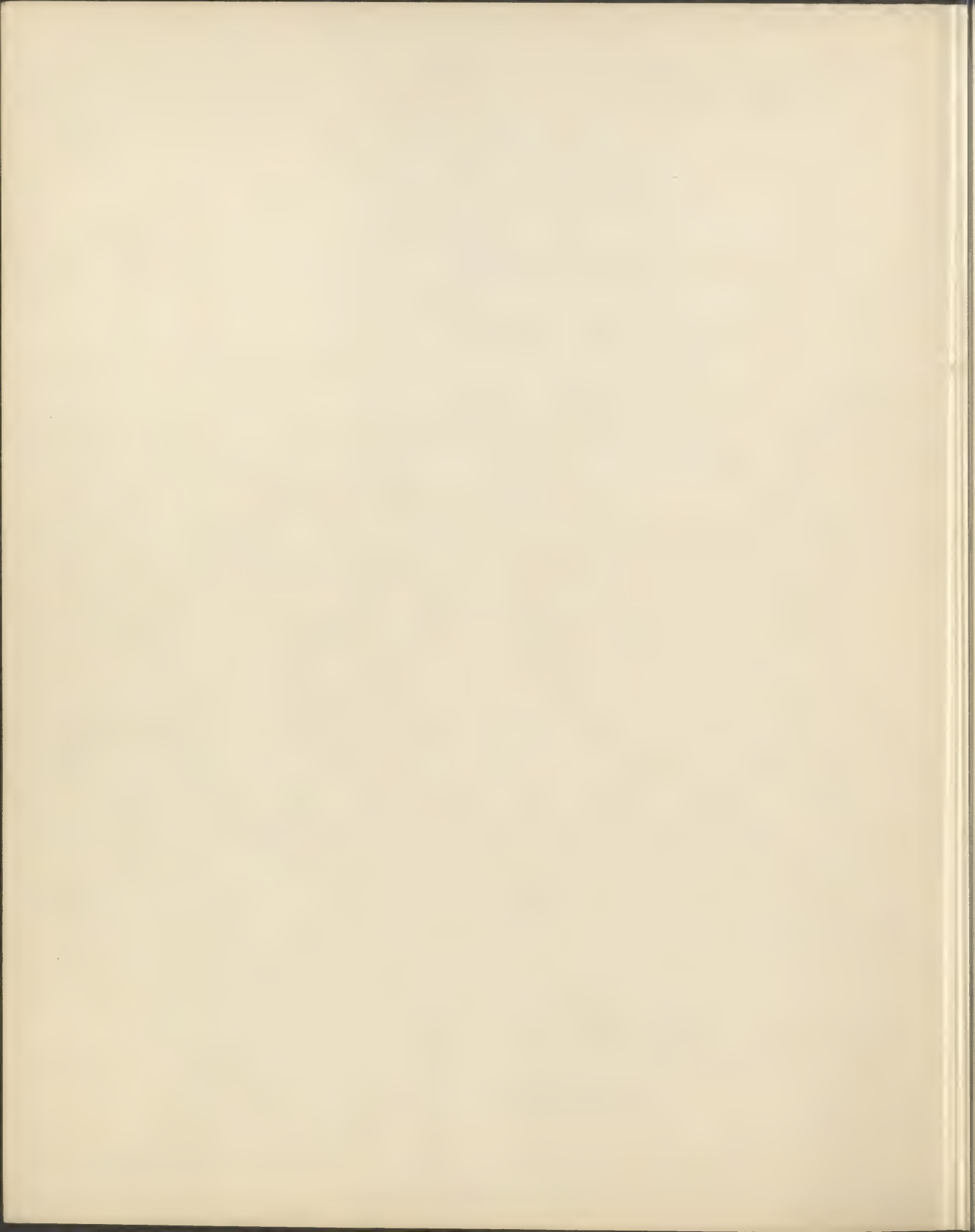
Trano of Cologne 12th century
Cantus mensuralis.

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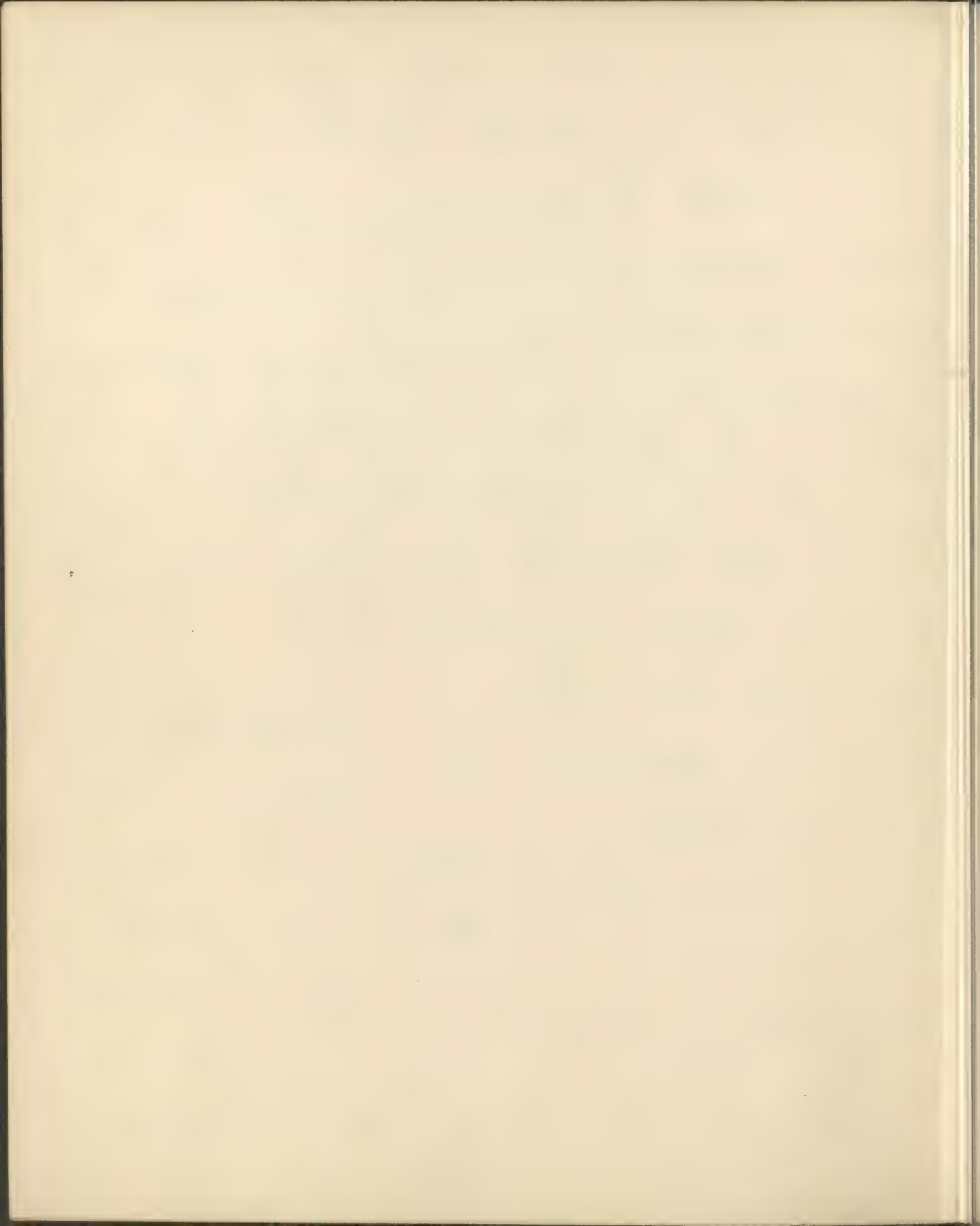


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When the singer extemporized his ornamented passages between one
essential note and another it was understood that the
singer also had the other part, which was not ornamented,
waiting till he had done. They held on to a single
note like the principle singer, who was called the discounter
showed off his ingenuity and his invention. But when people
began to write down such things, it was absolutely necessary
that they should find out some way of showing the relative
lengths of notes - something which served the same purpose as
our measure & rests & quavers - otherwise the singer
could not be kept together with certainty even for as much
as three notes in a row - for you must remember they
had no bars and did not ~~have~~ ^{find} them necessary for several
centuries - But in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they
continued ~~the~~ the scheme of length notes which enabled singers
to know exactly how long they were to hold a long note while
somebody else was singing shorter ones. They found it a
fearfully difficult to devise, and the system they did devise
is a fearfully tangled and complicated that it causes
as much difficulty to decipher. They also by degrees



discovered a way to show on paper exactly how much
higher or lower one note was to be than another. The
way they worked this out was so intricate that it is
positively comical. But I don't want to distract you
with details at present. I only want to get you now
to feel the way in which music progressed from small beginnings
to the elaborate complexity of modern times. One has to
dwell rather long on the early stages ~~to~~ because there were
such a lot of things that had to be found out before
they could make any headway at all. But when
at last they had settled a scheme by which one could
identify how many many minims went to a Semibreve,
and what intervals a man was to try to sing when
he saw certain signs and strange marks on parchment
composers began to apply themselves to new inventions.
Then began the tortoise climb which has continued
ever since till our own times.
They had necessarily to begin with two parts - and having



accepted the principle of one voice holding on while another sang a
lot of notes they made two discoveries. One was an elementary form
of pedal. And the other was that there were ~~long~~^{other} intervals
besides fifths & fourths which were quite agreeable to hear & and
might be admitted as music without scandal. They had
doubts for some time whether thirds were to be regarded as
dissonances or consonances. Major thirds they were sure were highly
dissonant - but all the same they said indeed all notes
of the scale were admirable as interval notes - and the
results were often very strange to our ears, for they seem
to have treated such dissonances as they used - as interval notes -
quite differently from our ways. The truth is that
they emphasized to a degree which is not easy to realize that
the voices were concerned with singing combined melodies.
The notes of one of the melodies might be ~~short~~^{long} and the
notes of the other short, but the mind was preoccupied with
thinking of them as melodies. It is extremely difficult
to realize that they had no idea of harmony whatever.
They had not & no feeling for it. But they merely
found themselves to have only certain consonances at certain

The principal heroes of the early struggles were
Parisian composers. The most celebrated was Perotin
Perotinus maximus he was called. Another was
Leonin, and another Labillon. This was somewhere
about the reign of Philip Augustus when Paris was
called the Athens of Europe and had a University
with an enormous number of students who flocked thither
from all parts of the ^{known} world. 12th & 13th centuries.

We also had an important musician of the name of
Walter Odington in England -
and this shows we were ~~not~~ giving music attention - and
is very much justified by our producing the greatest
composer in Europe ~~at the~~ in the early half of the
15th century - This was John Dunstaple. 1390 - 1453

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essential points. They might have uttered casually in a row
or fifth in a row or fourth in a row - because they suffered
the constraint. Of thirds they were a little cautious - and
they were bound to end in a unison.
It is quite pathetic to watch the difficulties they had to get even
two parts to go decently together. And it was a long while
before they dared to attempt three - as for four it
was a sort of revelation of human mental power
which seemed to them almost superhuman. At first
they could only achieve it by making one part
hold on for an immense while while the others
moved cautiously about. You may sometimes find
one voice holding it on for a time equivalent to
twenty or thirty bars - And if he let blow he was
allowed to leave off in the middle of a syllable
and go on again with the same syllable. Sometimes
in the earlier Music there are several notes in the
same syllable, and the only thing that saves it from being
inimitably ludicrous is that as far as we can make out

(Philip Augustus died 1223.)

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They did not begin the syllable ^{again} but went on with the vowel.
(Peter notes e=f)

From the point of view of combining melodies they did make
~~no~~ diverse attempts at one time to cut the Gordian knot
by actually singing several Runar tunes simultaneously.

Fortunately for us there have actually been recordings; and
we thereby have examples of one of the most curious
forms of art ever attempted - But more than that
we have also, for almost the first time, recorded examples
of ~~other~~ folksongs which would otherwise have been lost.

For the common practice was to combine one or two
folksongs either with a plainsong or a reiteration
of a short ~~formula~~ formula in longish notes with either
a familiar word from the Church service or nonsense syllables.

These strange products of ingenuity were called 'Motets'; and
they are sometimes extremely funny - But at the same
time it is often surprising how well the tunes are
got to go together. Such a form of art

Motets in the Montpelier MS.

Cong 1346 . Poitiers 1356 .

Wickliffe d. 1384
~~Poitiers~~

John Duns Scotus .

Henry IV reign .

Barnes was .

Netherlands come on the scene .

Dufay of Cambrai . 1400 - ~~1468~~ 1474

Jorgensen des Pous . latter part of 15th cent.

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admitted of no development, and in course of time
it ceased to be cultivated except in merry gatherings
at Universities and public schools, where they are known
as Dutch Chimes.

We need not follow the development of artistic counterpoint now
in detail. They toiled along, slowly obtaining more musical
results; and their works begin to assume qualities in ~~which we~~
can take pleasure and interest in the course of the ~~fifteenth~~
century. This undoubtedly is one of the ~~most~~ salient points
of the story and we find some justification in its being
associated with the name of John Dunstaple an Englishman -
of his preeminence ^{as a composer} at that time ~~we~~ we need have no doubt; though
most of his compositions are almost unperformable - some of them
carry the device of concurrent ornamental melodies to a pitch
which beats us. Yet we can see they imply a great musical
personality - ~~and~~ These works, as it were look backwards to
the methods of the previous time - and there are just a
few which, though weirdly crude, do anticipate a new
science of counterpoint. They stand at the parting of the ways

The change is also from rhythmic music
to arrhythmic music.

Between the period of Organum & that of Counterpoint
musicians addressed themselves very urgently to questions
of rhythm.

Choral CP distorts the sense of rhythm.

Josquin of Corte in Namur -
in Pope's choir from 1471 to 1484
died at Lille in 1521.

Italian premonition began at end
of 16th century.

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from the conditions of the medieval struggles & the artistic mortuary
which was coming, & showed itself in such complete and mature
form in little more than a century after Dunstable.
Unfortunately music was utterly blocked in this country, and
the lead passed on the water to the Netherlands; and
was the prerogative of Netherlands for more than a century —
From Dufay (1400 - 1474) through Josquin des Prez
and Obrecht, and A. Willaert (Maastricht 1480 - 1562)
to ~~some~~ their ~~first~~ greatest representative Orlando Lasso (1520 - 1574)
who visited Palestine ~~on the first voyage~~ in his time;
and set the crown on the fruitful labours of the Netherlands
and applied the methods they had developed in works still as
highly characteristic of their race and country. With him
ended the period of Netherlands preeminence, & from that
time Italy came to the front ~~ever~~ more and more.
The Nations had up to ~~now~~ the second half of the
fifteenth century depended on the Netherlands for their
Musicians, and a very large number of them occupied the
most important musical positions in Italy. The Nations

Palatrina -

~~no~~ Marenzio -

learnt their art from them and at the end of the 16th century
brought the art of pure unaccompanied Choral Music to its
highest perfection. Palestrina's works ~~for use in the service~~
~~of the Church~~ are looked upon rightly as the most perfect example
of their kind - All the best of them were ~~devotional~~ and composed
for use in the services of the Roman Church; and ~~they~~ make
the most perfect devotional Music in existence - It cannot be
said that any other composer achieved anything nearly as beautiful
for its serenity, sincerity and fervour. Vittoria most nearly
~~approach~~ approaches him in the same line; and Luca Marenzio
took the foremost position in the newly cultivated branch of
the ~~unaccompanied~~ Madrigal - ^{Unaccompanied} Choral Music then had reached
the highest perfection of which it seemed capable - And men
naturally turned to cultivate new fields, as they felt the
possibilities of such art were exhausted.

It is a strange thing to look back upon. For the only
Music men thought worthy of the name of art was confined
to such as could be produced by voices. Men had not begun
to think of anything of the nature of form or organization.
The music had to be built upon a given melody

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such as you call a Contrapunto. They hardly used any ~~dissonance~~ The only dissonance they used were prepared ones, and even of these they were sparing - and there were hardly any subjects which really stood out from the context; which was then arising mainly to the fact that the old ~~classical~~ ^{Choral} ~~Antiquated~~ music was quite unhygienic. Compromised attitude of mind towards independent vocal parts made them obscure the sense of rhythm. And a very quaint result followed as we shall see.

At the end of the fifteenth century change was in the air. Compromises were beginning to feel the call of secular music. The secular spirit was becoming impetuous - and the old pained beauty of devotional music did not satisfy mens cravings. They were trying their best hand at more characteristic expression. They tried to write down songs for voices calling them ballads - and they were trying their hands at instrumental music. By this time the mechanism of organs was being sufficiently improved for them to be used as solo instruments - and they had viols, (the flat-backed dullsounding predecessors of Violins & Cellos;) & Clavichords and harpsichords and lutes and trombones and trumpets, and some very clumsy reed instruments. And they tried their hands at ~~with~~ making music for such instruments. But the inevitable continuity of the gradual development of art is shown in a very quaint way. Mens minds had been entirely

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expressed in developing Choral Contrapuntal Music; they had not
before & think of the kind of artistic methods which were appropriate
to instrumental art. They did not realize the necessity for rhythm
in a ~~not~~ the necessity of form and design. So when they
wanted to write & denote artistic movements for instruments in
combinations they tried to write them on the same lines as
they wrote Choral Music - without words - with the very
dreary results. And even Music for harpsichords and lutes
was also frequently written in the same style. But there
were attempts at dance tunes - and the adventurous
forerunners of Organ Music of a totally new kind made
their appearance in the persons of Andrea Gabrieli
1519 - 1590 and his great nephew Giovanni Gabrieli
1557 - 1612 and the father of modern Organ Music
Claudio Monteverdi 1533 - 1604 - All these three belonged
to Venice, and in that romantic town in the romantic
shadows of St Mark's they set the ball rolling in
the ~~new~~ Modern direction - away from strict counterpoint
towards harmonic treatment and the characteristic effects
of runs and arpeggios and kinds of Phrasing which were
quite alien from the ^{distinct} tranquil Music of ~~choral~~ voices.

buying the first from alt 540.

and Contrabass 579.

made pipe \$590 - did 604.

The *Endurance* is
in one of the little white books.

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